LECTURES ON

GANDHIAN PHILOSOPHY

Shri U. N. DHEBAR

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AMALAI UNIVERSITY

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Shri U. N. DHEBAR

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ANNAMALAI UNIVERSITY

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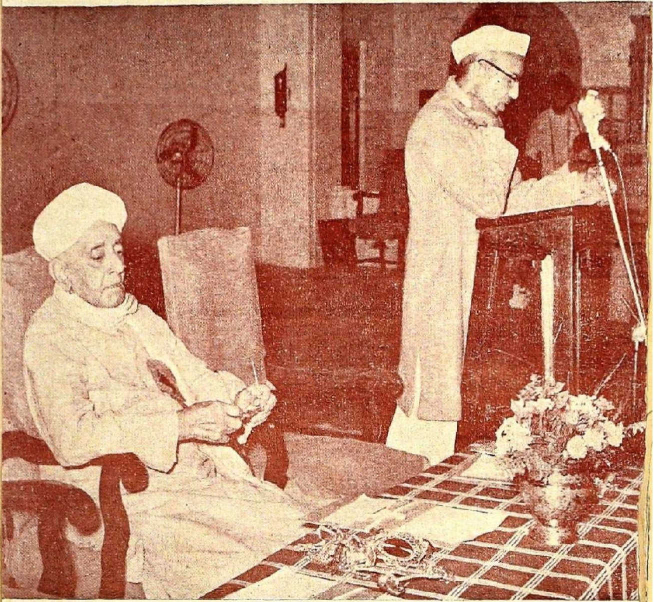

FOREWORD

Shri U. N. Dhebar who had been a leading lawyer before he abandoned the legal profession and entered on his political career, is a well-known figure in Indian Public Life and one of the prominent followers of Mahatma Gandhi. He was Chief Minister in Sourashtra for six years and has enjoyed the great distinction of being elected on three occasions as President of the Indian National Congress. He has also served on important Governmental Committees.

At the Kurukshetra University he delivered three lectures on "Gandhian Thought" the scheme of such lectures having been outlined by the Government of India in order to illustrate the various aspects of Gandhiji's life and thought.

Mr. Dhebar recently delivered, under the auspices of the Annamalai University, three lectures which elicited considerable interest. He has pointed out that a Chair has been instituted in the Harvard University to undertake research on non-violence and in his first lecture, Mr. Dhebar outlines his interpretation of Gandhiji's doctrine of Ahimsa and discusses its adaptability to such new and dynamic

situations as are now confronting this country. He insists that Gandhiji would never have contemplated surrender in the face of aggression. Analysing non-violence and its potentialities and technique, he describes 'life force' as the motive power for our actions, Gandhiji having demonstrated the strength and effectiveness of this force. In Gandhiji's own words, "non-violence does not mean meek submission to the will of a tyrant". The elements of fearlessness or Abhaya, of conscious suffering and of forgiveness, as parts of the programme of non-violence, are elucidated by Mr. Dhebar with illustrations drawn from Gandhiji's own work in South Africa and elsewhere.

In his second lecture, Mr. Dhebar concentrates on non-violence as a condition pre-requisite to human survival in relation to the realities of the present world situation and the technological achievements which have created a great dilemma for the human race. He insists that no man who has reposed his faith in truth has been left down by nature. He adds "we cannot face the problems of the nuclear age with the degree of faith that was adequate for an earlier age".

The third lecture gives a picture of the future economy of India in terms of Gandhiji's programme of village-reconstruction, Eastern and Western modes of production and social organisation. He stresses

that, according to Gandhiji, the essential purpose of human life was not material acquisition but a search for truth through self-purification. Civilisation, in other words, consists not in the multiplication but in the restriction of wants. At the same time, Mr. Dhebar points out that Gandhiji did not work for a primitive economy but sought to make it clear that industrialisation should, as far as possible, proceed on the basis of a maximum of decentralisation.

These lectures furnish a clear perspective of the Gandhian outlook on life and life's problems and are specially valuable as emenating from a fervent and talented disciple of Gandhiji.

Vice-Chancellor's Lodge,
Annamalai University,
Annamalainagar.

C. P. RAMASWAMI AIYAR,
Vice-Chancellor.

LECTURE - I

NON-VIOLENCE AS THE LAW OF HUMAN SPECIES

1. Gandhian Lecture Series have now become an annual feature in most of our Universities. It may, perhaps, be known to some of you that the Harvard University has founded a Chair to undertake research on non-violence. Pitrim A. Sorokhin, the Director of the Research Centre in Creative Altruism in the Harvard University, has "reverently dedicated to the deathless Mohandas K. Gandhi" his great work on "Reconstruction of Humanity" using non-violence as the main theme. Two of the eminent thinkers of the world – Sir Bertrand Russell and Dr. Martin Luther King described Gandhiji's message as the only hope for human survival. Gandhiji, apart from the fact that he is revered as the Father of a nation comprising a sixth of the human race, has become a symbol of the aspirations of the down-trodden people of the world and of humanity's longing for peace and harmony.

Interpretation of Gandhiji – A stupendous Task :

2. To interpret Gandhiji is a stupendous task. My mind goes back to a day in April 1919. I was studying in the fourth form in a Bombay High School. My elder brother took me to witness a procession. Processions are now the order of the day. In those days they were rare. The day was called the Black Sunday. Gandhiji had given a call to the Nation to observe it as a day of fast, to hold public prayers,

processions and meetings and to protest against the Rowlatt Act - a repressive measure enacted to suppress the few civil liberties that existed then and suppress the demand for freedom which was getting louder and louder. We were all thrilled that any one could challenge the mighty British so openly. He himself led the procession. I saw him then for the first time - small a figure, a little bent, but with grim determination written on the face. The eyes of everyone were riveted on this figure in acknowledgement of something that they owed to him. He was with them only for a period of three or four years then. But in that brief period he had instilled in them a new purpose and a new will and given them a new weapon. He had already become their man of destiny.

3. For thirty years, Gandhiji was to remain at the helm of affairs to lead and guide the nation with simple axioms and effective dynamic programmes. He was to galvanise the inactive passive masses of people and carry them forward in a revolution - a revolution mildest in appearance as compared to other revolutions of the world - a revolution wholly conceived, planned and executed by him. Mild though this revolution was, it was to topple an empire.

4. Gandhiji was a living dynamo of ideas and activity. During his stirring public life of more than half a century he was to fight three poltical battles against racialism in South Africa and many more against imperialism at home. He was to fight against his own kith and kin for the rights of the untouchables and for the freedom of the subjects of the Indian States. He was to fight communalism and religious reaction. He was to struggle for the emancipation

of Indian women and for the welfare of labour. Besides these struggles he was to influence directly and indirectly many a facet of Indian life. Above all he was to challenge a whole body of conceptions and values which the whole mankind had thought to be un-challengeable.

It is said of Napoleon that he wrote and left behind 60,000 letters and notes. Gandhiji's writings and speeches, if published, would fill libraries. Books on Gandhiji are galore and are still pouring out.

Moreover, he fills the vast vista of my mind and the minds of thousands, who had the privilege of serving the country under him.

It is so very difficult to condense his ageless message in a few pages.

Interpretation in the New Dynamic Situation - Still more difficult :

5. 8th September, 1962, will prove a day of destiny for our motherland, as did that day in April 1919. As the Chinese army was invading our borders across the watersheds on the high and mighty Himalayas on the North East, the broad masses of India were rubbing their eyes, collecting their thoughts and trying to fix up their mind on an inviolable decision. Our people are exceedingly tolerant and trustful. They do not get easily agitated over many things which usually cause irritation, anger and even bitterness to the people in other lands. But once they are moved from within and once they come to a decision, none can hold them back. The attack, however, of the 8th September came upon our people

as the last straw on the camel's back. It has burst the dams of inexhaustable patience and our people have braced themselves for the final sacrifice.

6. The entire attention of the people in the midst of such a crisis is naturally focussed on a single objective - to throw-out the Chinese. To venture to talk of truth and non-violence in the midst of this upheaval is like performing tight-rope walking, which a man engaged in active politics rarely likes, but can seldom avoid.

Two Questions :

7. Two questions are on everyone's lips. The question most often asked is, "Would Gandhiji have permitted military defence against China?". It is a natural question to be asked. It is, however, never wise to anticipate or imagine the possible reactions of epoch-making personalities. Such persons are extra-ordinary because they are exceptionally original. Their power of perception, their capacity to evolve solutions, their terrific initiative, their ability to forge and create instruments suitable to the occasion and the needs of the situation and their dynamic handling, all combined affect the situation powerfully. They are politicians, diplomats, statesmen, psychologists, sociologists all rolled into one. Gandhiji alone coud have given a reply to the question.

8. But those who knew Gandhiji well will have no hesitation in saying that with him there could have been no question of surrender in face of aggression. In this he differed from the pacifists of the West. Gandhiji was a man of action. The dynamics of his policy lay in working in the midst

of the main current of life of the people and not in the side and narrow rivulets and brooks. For him the Chinese aggression would have been as much a problem facing himself which he and the masses together were required to solve. So far as he was concerned there was no doubt that he would have worked only for a solution through non-violence. But if the people were not prepared for non-violent resistance, he would have allowed them and the Government to try and to solve it militarily. He would never have permitted anyone to get away with the idea that his concept of non-violence was a weak expression of a helpless and docile personality or was a plea to shield inaction or surrender.

9. The other question generally asked is about the feasibility of successful defence through non-violence. It is also a very relevant question. I have treated the question at length in its normal context. As we proceed, we shall see that non-violence has a great role to play in the prevailing crisis and even a greater role in the context of world peace, in the nuclear age. India cannot do without non-violence nor can the world.

Non-violence – What it is

10. Before we jump to the highest climb of non-violent defence, however, let us try to understand what is non-violence. Non-violence is not something that can be looked at in an inverted manner from top downwards treating non-violent defence first and the philosophy of non-violence thereafter. This way of looking at non-violence from the wrong end has resulted in creating a lot of confusion about it. That is an abnormal way of looking at anything.

It produces an impression that the thing itself is abnormal and is meant for abnormal people.

11. There is nothing abnormal, however, about non-violence. Whether we are conscious of it or not, human beings in their normal state are conditioned for non-violence. Let us take the case of a child at the breast of its mother or think of the love and affection that bind the members of a family or which promote cordiality between good neighbours; and then let us think of the sense of happiness and of fullness of life these relationships produce. On the other hand take the instance of a mother kicking or cursing her child or think of families cursed with short tempers, quarrels or litigations, and neighbours with aggressive temperaments and then think of the unhappiness these relationships produce. Here in the two contradictory pictures, we discern the presence or the absence of a phenomenon or an element which accounts for the resulting happiness or un-happiness.

12. The two pictures are casual; but not that 'element'. Studying then in closer detail, we shall find that the resulting happiness is only the end product, the intervening dealings between human beings concerned manifest the outward activity, but at the base of these two lies something that is spontaneous, that is sanctified, that constitutes a gift from heaven to sweeten our lives and the lives of all those around us. This underlying element is the spirit of non-violence. In concrete terms it is the feeling on the part of the mother that she not only owns the child, but also belongs to the child. It is this sense of 'mutual belonging' that produces sweet responses in the child, which radiate happiness all around.

It is this sense of mutual belonging that opens out the barriers of separateness and throws one another into each other's arms. When a mother refuses to belong to the child, but wants to own it, the trouble starts. That can happen to brothers in a family and even to husbands and wives. When the husband refuses to belong to the wife but wants to own her, the difficulty arises; much more so when the wife adopts such a posture and refuses to belong to the husband but wants to own him. The life may flow on "as the water flows through the pipe" as Tolstoy put it. The sweetness and charm of life are, however, missed.

Non-violence - Its Potential :

13. I confess that I am indulging in some oversimplification and that too before one of the most intelligent audiences I have ever been called upon to address. I have done this intentionally to expel from the minds of people, all thought that non-violence is something unnatural, abnormal, other-worldly or difficult for mortals to practise. It is a fashion these days to make every thing appear difficult and to examine everything from the complicated end. Gandhiji's speciality was that he built his mighty campaigns upon simple truths of life. He had known through personal experience that though these truths appeared simple on the surface, they were charged with a life-giving potential. It was because of that latent vitality in them that they have stood the test of time even against a world least concerned about their need. He was convinced of the great power and potential of non-violence.

14. Gandhiji based his own life on that power and secured a lasting place for himself among the immortal sages of the world. He based his movements against racialism on this power and obliged the adversary to come to terms with him. He based his mass movements to secure our liberation from centuries of bondage on the power of non-violence and secured to us our freedom. Very few perhaps remember that the powerful leadership which has been leading us since 1920 is entirely the creation of the movement based on non-violence. This leadership has served the country already for more than four decades and will continue to serve it, if God so wills, for a couple of decades more.

15. Veritably in his case we can say, 'He came, he saw and he conquered'. He could do this because he had reached the source of our philosophy, history, tradition and the source of our culture as embedded in the hearts and minds of our simple people, and had seen the deep reservoirs of spiritual faith and energy stored therein. He was convinced that it was this spiritual faith and not the weapons of the warriors that had enabled our race to withstand the onslaught of ages. He could do this because he was building upon something that already was there. He was building upon a root-system that existed and not upon something that had to be imported. What was more, the whole process was so simple for the people to follow that it required no big preparation. He demonstrated to us that non-violence could face successfully the test of one of the gravest emergencies in our history, the emergency to throw out an entrenched empire

and bring liberation to a beaten, frustrated and exploited people.

Technique of Non-Violence :

16. The genius of Gandhiji lay in developing a technique for the use of that potential weapon. Non-Violence, according to him, began with oneself. It began with the acceptance of the phenomenon of spirit residing in oneself. The existence of this 'life-force', as Pandit Nehru calls it, cannot be disputed. Life is life because of it. Without it life is a corpse. Consciousness, integration and coordination in living creatures are its outward manifestations. We value these, but we neglect the spirit. It is this life force - this dynamic element in our personality - that provides us the strength and the power. That dynamic element can provide us as much strength and power as we want to withstand all trials and tribulations and fight successfully the power of the mightiest in the cause of truth and justice.

17. The life of an Indian is expected to be dedicated to the search and realisation of this element, the spirit. It is this portion of our history, culture, tradition and philosophy which is a matter of perpetual pride for us. It has given our nation a destination. Individuals in the past used to strive and realise this source in their life-time and utilise its great potential for their spiritual benefit. The great contribution of Gandhiji and his greatest gift to humanity was to demonstrate that this phenomenon of the life force, this spirit, this elemental source of strength and happiness can be utilised on a social scale for the benefit of the

society as a whole. Non-violence is its vehicle. Gandhiji described the relation of this phenomenon to non-violence in the following words:

> "I am not a visionary, I am a practical idealist. The religion of non-violence is not meant merely for the Rishis and Saints. It is meant for the common people as well. Non-violence is the law of our species as violence is the law of the brute. The spirit lies dormant in the brute and he knows no law but that of the physical might. The dignity of man requires obedience to a higher law - to the strength of the spirit."

18. The second truth, which, again was known to individuals, but never practised on a social scale and which Gandhiji brought into the wider field of operation, was the consciousness of the strength of this force - this spirit. I quote him again:

> "Non-violence in its dynamic condition means conscious suffering. It does not mean meek submission to the will of the tyrant. Working under this law of our being, it is possible for a single individual to defy the whole might of an unjust empire, to save his honour, his religion, his soul and lay the foundation for that empire's fall or its regeneration."

19. The third aspect about non-violence was casting away the fear of death. Gandhiji says:

> "Let me not be misunderstood. Strength does not come from physical capacity. It comes from an indomitable will. An average Zulu

is any way more than a match for an average Englishman in bodily capacity. But he flies from an English boy because he fears the boy's revolver or those who will use it for him. He fears death and is nervous in spite of his burly figure".

20. The fourth truth in relation to non-violence is the power of forgiveness. Again let us refer to his words:

"But I believe non-violence is infinitely superior to violence; forgiveness is more manly than punishment. Forgiveness adorns a soldier. But abstinence is forgiveness only when there is the power to punish. It is meaningless when it proceeds from a helpless creature. We in India may in a moment realise that one hundred thousand Englishmen need not frighten three hundred million human beings. A definite forgiveness would, therefore, mean a definite recognition of our strength. With enlightened forgiveness must come a wave of strength in us which would make it impossible for a Dyer and a Frank Johnson to heap affront on India's devoted head. India can gain more by waiving the right of punishment. We have better work to do, a better mission to deliver to the world".

21. We have in these four or five passages the basic elements of the technique of non-violence. If we try to live up to them even in a small way, we shall experience the power they possess. A man becomes violent only when he forgets himself or forgets his own essential nature and his own human

character. He does this because he feels that he has no remedy against injustice. It is helplessness that generally drives a person to violence. But once he realises that he has a reservoir of strength within himself, which cannot oblige him to subjugate himself to injustice and also can secure justice, he can face anyone and everybody calmly.

22. Again Gandhiji was laying down no new law for ourselves. He was merely inducing us to extend our circle of those whom we love so as to include our adversaries also therein. This process of deliberate extension of the circle entails training of mind to belong spontaneously to all, in other words, training of mind to love even our opponent. Erich Fromm describes love's relationship thus:

> "Productive love always implies a syndrome of attitudes; that of care, responsibility, respect and knowledge. If I love, I care - that is, I am actively concerned with the other person's growth and happiness; I am not a spectator. I am responsible, that is I respond to his needs, to those he can express and more so to those he cannot or does not express. I respect him, that is (according to the original meaning of *respicere*) I look at him as he is, objectively and not distorted by my wishes and fears. I know him, I have penetrated through his surface to the core of his being and related myself to him from my core, from the centre, as against the periphery, of my being".

23. Finally and this constitutes part of his life work — he helped us to learn to meet the challenges against untruth and injustice from any

quarter with the weapon of self - suffering. It was his conviction that for those who wanted to live their lives as human beings, as distinguished from the lower variety of creatures, there was a battle to win every minute - a battle in the cause of truth and justice. It may be a battle against the adversary within oneself or may be a battle against the adversary without. In the former case one has to rectify his conduct. If it is the latter it should begin with an effort at persuasion and conversion accompanied by non-cooperation with the evil, whatever be the consequences and whatever the harm and loss to oneself. If after all the avenues at persuasion and conversion are exhausted and still the evil persists, one has to resort to peaceful, civil and dignified resistance. Everyone of these steps is an integral part of the technique of non-violence which Gandhiji taught us.

24. Life constitutes a perpetual challenge to the man-hood of a non-violent person and as he faces the challenge, he gains in strength and height. It was this process that put the country on the road to integration. It was also this process that brought us freedom. And finally, it was this process that secured for us a place of position in the international world. India was respected not for its military strength; India was respected not because of its intellectual brilliance nor was it respected for its wealth or possessions. It was the unique manner by which we secured our freedom that produced an impact on the mind of humanity about our moral calibre and national character. It was this that gave us a place of honour among the nations of the world and lent us strength in enhancing the cause of peace.

25. It is in the nature of non-violence that its activities have to be reflected in small things before it operates on bigger things. Gandhiji used to say that the power of non-violence is hidden like an iceberg with threefourths of its height under the waters in a deep sea. The great quality of non-violence is to bind the people at the source, tie broken knots, build up spiritual bridges between swarming gulfs and inject the whole process with a new faith and a new strength. Unless a person succeeds in building up these bridges at the source, he can never succeed on the wider or the higher plane of life. The hearts and minds of people are the base for the operation of non-violence.

26. As we read his autobiography and other records written on him, pictures and pictures float before our eyes of how Gandhiji injected, with love, all his activities and struggles. We see Gandhiji preparing sandals in a South African jail, which he later presented to General Smuts; we see Gandhiji sucking, with his own lips, the poison from the toes of a Zulu bitten by a snake; or becoming a washerman or a bearer to some leader or the other; we read about Gandhiji removing the night soil; we read about Gandhiji looking after his colleagues and their children as a father and Gandhiji treating even Lord Mountbatten's and Lord Linlithgos' daughters like his own. We read about Gandhiji accepting the responsibility of staying on in Calcutta to help the Muslim League government to maintain law and order, on the eve of Independence and form himself into a 'one-man boundary force', and to prevent blood-shed, in Bengal. Last but not the least, we read of Gandhiji persuading the rulers of Indian States to think in

terms of India as a whole and assuring them a position of honour and dignity. Not a day passed, not an hour of his life, when he was not engaged in fulfilling the law of love.

But that was not all that he had set before us. His was a mission of ceaseless struggle in the cause of truth, justice and peace. So, as we read about him, other pictures also float before us. We read about Gandhiji parting with his dear and near ones; about Gandhiji fasting time and again; about Gandhiji wearing out in the service of the nation; about Gandhiji being jeered, mobbed, attacked, stabbed, bombed and finally gunned. With love in his heart, with the power of spirit to strengthen him he forded the great river of darkness and opened for us the flood gates of light.

Can We Do Without Non-Violence ?

27. There are people who ridicule non-violence. Some of them are very distinguished personages. They speak about it as if it was something out of date or an exhausted force. It is necessary to realise that there is going on in our country, a gross oversimplification of the problems facing India. It is so clear to me that not all the violence in the world can solve the problems of this country. Practice of violence in solving the internal problems of India will be a disservice the extent of which will depend upon the type and the volume of violence we may use. But there is not the slightest doubt that whatever the violence used it can never solve the problems of the country. It should be remembered that this country has a background of servitude of centuries not only at the political but at the social and economic level.

This has left grave political, social and economic problems. Whoever cares to understand this would realise that we are all sitting on a volcano. Our only asset is the tolerance of our people. Take only the problem of intergration, we shall have to weed out not only the consciousness of castes and communities but the social, economic and political injustice which vitiates this consciousness. Economic disparities can easily be mis-interpreted as the outcome of social superiorities and political privileges, the outcome of economic superiorities. Government can only lighten our task in maintaining order and arranging for development. But the people who are socially and economically in a disadvantageous position can be won over only when they see that the society itself is mindful of their interests. It is, in other words, the determination of our society to rid itself of the social and economic evils, accompanied by a determined effort on its part to win over the people in a disadvantageous position that can bring about emotional integration. Can we obtain it by fighting amongst ourselves with arms, that we now possess perhaps in good quantity? This will only promote civil strife.

28. If we shall go a little deeper, we shall find that there is a host of problems besides social integration. Take the problem of possessing classes versus non-possessing classes; problem of privileges by birth, rank, status or positions against the non-privileged; of educated and the uneducated; of urban versus rural areas and of different outlooks and approaches and methods and so on. It is a question of reparing the neglect of several centuries. We shall be building a new society on poor foundations if we

try to build it upon political slogans or on economic inducements. What we need is a medium that will give content to the term India and the term Indians: what she stood for; what exactly we are going to learn at her feet and what we all shall stand for. It will then be building upon our real foundation Outward conformity will then not be a matter of much concern. We owe this to our motherland. We owe it to the memory of the Father of the Nation. It was not an accident or fluke that we are free and functioning. It was a reality perfomed before our own eyes and the eyes of the world. It is only the same medium that will ensure our attaining our end without damaging our unity and dignity in the country and outside - the medium of loving sufference in the cause of truth and justice.

29. I would like to end with a question put by Leon Blum. He asked, "The human race had the wisdom to create science and art, why should it not be capable to create the world of justice, brotherliness and peace?" In the teachings of Gandhiji we have the answer. This teaching is our heritage. We can deny ourselves the use of it if we like. But it is that heritage that gives a distinctive place of honour and respect to us as Indians, it is that heritage that has sustained us and it is that heritage that will sustain us in the end.

LECTURE - II

NON - VIOLENCE AS A CONDITION ESSENTIAL FOR HUMAN SURVIVAL

1. Yesterday we discussed what constitutes non-violence and the elements constituting the technique of non-violence as evolved by Gandhiji. Today, I come to a controversial issue of war and futility.

2 Humanity has entered the nuclear age. It is a culmination of far - reaching advances in the field of science and technology. Man has already reached a stage of affluence in relation to his material wants in a third of the globe. He has also acquired means to banish poverty from the rest, if he so wills. Man's interests are now not confined to the globe alone. He is reaching out to the space surrounding, the space beyond and the sister planets that move with his own. It is certainly a glorious period in the history of mankind. Every human being can take justifiable pride in the attainments of his fellow men. Man is proving the worth and value of his immense latent powers and potential.

Some Realities of World Situation :

3. But side by side is developing another picture. Affluence is accompanied by mental and moral sickness. Racial tensions are mounting. Society is getting divided into two polarised units armed to the teeth. Each is afraid of the other as seldom man has been before. Nuclear bombs threaten to destroy a bulk of the

human species. 'Fall out' from the nuclear tests is already poisoning vegetation on which man sustains himself and is endangering posterity.

4 Efforts are under way to handle the situation. The United Nations has been striving for peace. But its efforts have met with limited success. Korea, Indo-China, Kashmir, Ghaza, Congo, Berlin and Cuba are so many mines that can explode at any time. The United Nations guides and advises but becomes relatively helpless when it comes to the enforcement of its will especially against the major powers. Men of religion, thinkers and sociologists, who realise the dangers and risks involved, suggest readjustment and sometimes revolutionary changes. The readjustment they suggest, rarely proves adequate; the revolutionary changes they suggest are brushed aside as the whims of theorists, visionaries, dreamers or cranks. The fate of the world in the result hangs on a precarious balance.

5. The term 'precarious balance' requires to be properly understood in the context of the nuclear age. It is not as if one were sitting precariously on a stool or even a ladder or for the matter of that on the ledge of a rock with deep sea below. Dr. Rajendra Prasad gave details of it, which I am reproducing just to give you an idea of the extreme delicacy of this precarious balance.

6. He began with a description of the burst of a twenty - megaton bomb:

> "As the bomb explodes the sky fills with a bluish white glare. A man standing sixty miles away would see a fire-ball thirty times brighter than the noonday sun - a fire-ball hot as the centre of the sun.

The fire-ball rapidly expands until it is $4\frac{1}{2}$ miles wide. As it expands it begins to rise, scorching an ever-widening area.

The matter sucked up by the fire-ball starts to condense on reaching upper air layers five to ten miles up. It spreads out, forming a radio-active mushroom cloud. The material in this cloud begins to descend as fall-out.

Meanwhile, an intense pressure wave, or shock, travelling faster than sound, spreads out from the centre of the explosion crushing almost everything in its path until it gradually loses its force.

Following this shock-front comes the wind of more than 1,000 miles per hour. As it moves outward the wind diminishes; behind it a vacuum develops. Then the surrounding air rushes in, fanning the fires started by the thermal radiation and initial blast damage.

Soon these fires will join and develop into a fire storm that could cover an area many miles across, destroying all, that will burn structures and living things.

The blast itself would create a hole 240 feet deep at its deepest point and a half mile across. Within a radius of 7·7 miles the destruction would be severe. The casualties in a large city could include five to six million dead."

7. He next quoted testimonies and estimates of responsible individuals and organisations:

(a) General Gavin, the former Chief of Army Research and Development in the United States, in giving his evidence before the Symington Senate Committee stated:

> "Current planning estimates run on the order of several hundred million deaths..."

(b) The United States Federal Civil Defence Administration estimated that if nuclear weapons having a combined yield of 2,500 megatons were dropped, the resulting damage would be:

> "that, on the first day, 36 million would be dead and 57 million injured, and that by the sixtieth day there would be 72 million dead and 21 million injured, leaving 58 million uninjured."

(c) The National Planning Association of America in its report pointed out that in addition to the figures that the Federal Civil Defence Administration has been able to calculate for the radio active death which might be expected within two months of the hostilities.

> "there will be an undetermined number of further casualties.........During these following fifty years, the remainder of the world would probably suffer some 10 million additional deaths as a result of the induction of tumors and genetic effects from the world-wide fall-out. It is striking that the damage to neutral countries may be as high as 5 to 10 per cent of that suffered by the beligerents".

(d) Dr. Linus Pauling estimates that the damage already accrued as a result of the tests so far made is as follows:

> "160,000 children will be born with gross physical and mental defects during the next generation. The Carbon 14 produced will cause an estimated total of 4,000,000 still-births, embryonic, neo-natal or childhood deaths and children with physical and mental defects. These 4,000,000 victims will be spread out over some score of generations."

8. The world possessed at the end of 1961 no 2,500 megatons but something like 1,50,000 megatons corresponding to an average of 500 tons of high explosions for each person living.

9. I hope you will now have some idea of what the term 'precarious balance' means, on which hangs the fate of the world. Science by itself is neither good nor bad; nor is technology. It is the purposes for which and the manner in which science and technology are used that make them good or bad. The nuclear era throws upon the human race a grave responsibility. It has to be seen that while science and technology are utilised for human good they do not result in a catastrophic destruction of the human race. The issue that faces mankind is not therefore to reject the nuclear energy but to take into account the perilous situation in which the nuclear energy has placed it. We have to prevent the use of nuclear energy for destructive purposes. The Cuban crisis should act as a constant reminder that the problem is as real as the picture given by Dr. Rajendra Prasad; it is as frantic and maddening.

Wisdom's View :

10. When I think of the Nuclear weapons, I am reminded of the mythological story of Bhasmasura. The story has a moral of its own. Power without wisdom is a menace to oneself and the country as well. Anyone, however, who dares to suggest that in this age of highly advanced science, the world lacks wisdom, is bound to be summarily laughed out. Luckily for humanity there are persons who do not bother being laughed at. They have the vision to look beyond the blazing brilliance of our achievements and the integrity to refrain from keeping back the concern they feel in their heart of hearts. Gandhiji was one of them. Writing as far back as in 1920 he said :

> "The Rishis who discovered the law of non-violence in the midst of violence were greater geniuses than Newton. They were themselves greater warriors than Wellington. Having themselves known the use of arms they realised their uselessness and taught a weary world that its salvation lay not through violence but through non-violence."

11. Gandhiji talked in monosyllables, and in the language not so usual in the Western world. But thirty years later he has started receiving support of the quarters least expected who talk in the terminology of the West. Sir John Cockroft about whom none can say he was other - worldly or antiquated wrote in 1957 :

> "It is clear enough already, however, that our civilisation can be destroyed in a night if ever these great forces are released from destination.

This presents the human race with the greatest challenge, it has ever had, to cooperate in disarmament and so to banish the threat which now hangs over the whole world."

12. Max Born the great nuclear physicist was also to write on the authority of three great military generals of the last war in support of his conclusion as under:

"Technology has become a decisive factor in waging war.........The second World War was decidedly a struggle of machines and technological organisation.. ..."

"The victorious General of last war rejected the new kind of warfare as a means of political decision...... He (General Eisenhower) said that he intended to see that the people of his profession would in future no longer be needed... General Montgomery and General MacArthur have likewise said that modern weapons have reduced war as such to the absurd. So much for the military ethics."

"Theologists and philosophers, ever since ancient times, have disputed and are still disputing the general problem, if and to what extent war is in accordance with the teachings of the Church and how it can be defended on moral grounds. With the exception of small groups such as Quakers, Christian theology up to now has not rejected war in general but only "unjust war". This is a distinction which is incomprehensible to my scientifically trained mind."

13. The remarks made by Sir John Cockroft and Mr. Max Born apply, it is true, more to the weapons of mass destruction. But when the weapons decide the fate of wars, the logical conclusion will be that both the sides will endeavour to secure and use the most powerful weapons they can avail of; and the most powerful weapons will necessarily include the weapons of mass destruction. Military birth control is even more difficult to practise, especially when it comes to the stage of losing a war. Acquisition of military superiority is the end of all military defence. Moreover, in an age, where an attack is considered to be the best form of defence, the distinction in terms of quantities of arms and fire power becomes merely hypothetical. An aggressive power can easily promote an armament race by threatening the integrity of its peace loving neighbours to which the latter have to succumb.

14. We have seen Gandhiji's view based on his reading of our history. We have also seen that the evidence of scientists, victorious generals and thinkers supports his view. Needs of humanity wanting to survive and considerations of human dignity also go in his favour. Genuine undisguised valour and bravery, not depending for their manifestation on arms, support him too. The lessons of the last two world wars add to the support. As we just noticed in the beginning of the talk - tangles of Berlin, Korea, Indo-China etc. demonstrate the truth of his statement. The only thing that comes in the way is the tradition of war. This gives an idea of the hold of traditions on the scientifically advanced world.

Does Violent Warfare Help Solutions or Bring Peace?

15. We have seen above the danger and risk involved in a war; now let us consider its utility in solving our problem. Have wars really helped people to advance, to defend or even to check violence, that we stick to the tradition so determinedly? There have been in this world people who look upon war as an ideological obligation. It is a cult with them. Efforts have been made in the past to set right these worshippers of the deity of war by counter wars. An objective analysis will show that these efforts have not succeeded in obliterating the worshippers or their cult. Kaiser was defeated but only to reappear in the persons of Hitler, Mussolini and Tojo. The latter were also defeated only to appear in the person of the head of the Chinese Communist Party. Whereas Hitler and his friends controlled twenty crores of people between them, China controls seventy crores – and China is not the less ambitious.

16. What then has been gained after two fierce world wars 'to end all wars' costing 20 to 30 million dead and many more millions maimed? It is difficult to give the answer. At best we can say that we have acquired a position to keep such people in check by constantly threatening them with atom bomb and the nuclear weapons. But will they be the only sufferers in case we decide to use these weapons? Will those who are trying to so keep in check the war mongers, themselves escape from the consequences? If not, will it not be sheer complacency to think that the rulers of China will not spot this weakness in our stand? Would it not

be that they will simply laugh out this threat because of this fundamental weakness? Mao Se Tung has already described the atom bomb as a 'Paper Tiger'. This is not because it has not got 'Nuclear teeth' but because Mao Se Tung realises that those who are sitting on the tiger are even in greater danger than he. It is already being said by the men who rule China that even if China were to lose 300 million to gain supremacy over the better part of the world, China would still be left with 400 millions while others will have been completely decimated.

17. Other questions also arise. One of them is "Can humanity permit wanton aggression?" The answer obviously is that it cannot. Permitting aggression would mean placing premium on broad day robbery and brute force. It would surely lead to nuclear war in the end. But the anxiety does nevertheless linger in the minds of sensible persons that in the process of getting the aggression vacated we should not land ourselves in a wider international conflict. The other side can remain indifferent to this danger and can also take full advantage of this anxiety. Another question arises: 'Can we afford a limited war? The answer can be that it may not be so dangerous if it is a war between smaller powers and no big power is interested or involved in it. But it will be a provisional answer. Who dare say when one of the bigger powers will not find it advantageous to fish in the troubled waters? A limited war can develop into a major war any time. Moreover, if Norman Cousins is right, it will be more economic for smaller powers to manufacture and possess nuclear bombs than to

maintain a modern army. A third question can also arise: "What happens if a big power goes out on a spree of aggression against the smaller power or powers? One can only answer that the laws of the jungle will obviously then prevail. The claws will maul and the teeth will bite. The additional faculties that man possesses, namely, reason and conscience which distinguish man from the beast, will prove hardly of any use. It is a baffling situation. Whichever way we travel there is a problem, and we reach no nearer a solution.

18. So we have come to this. The Western Imperialism is liquidating itself - has almost liquidated itself; neo-western-cum-eastern imperialism is rising in its place. Arms continue to be multiplied. The fear of war persists. Names of the dictators have changed; the names of the suffering people have changed; the areas of operation have changed; the cult continues. Powers small and those who think in a responsible manner live under constant danger and anxiety. In the meantime the nuclear coils get tighter and tighter round human beings whether they produce nuclear weapons in their countries or not.

The Great Dilemma of Human Race:

19. It is true that this is not the direction in which humanity wishes to go. But then who forced it or even now forces it to do so! Science? Such a hopeless unimaginative approach cannot be attributed to science. Science is objective. Science does not believe in suicide as an objective for working. Yet we continue to walk that way. Here is a fearful dichotomy developing. Wisdom guides humanity one way; the mind's habit leads it the other way.

Several times in the last decade, against its will against its better judgement, humanity has been brought to the brink of a fatal suicidal war - a final war - a war to end not wars but to end the human family. Except for the fact that one or the other power showed some good sense, history would have by now come to a stop. Those who showed the good sense deserve the gratitude of the world community. But is there any guarantee that one or the other party will always show that good sense! Moreover who is to guarantee that there will be no accident, mistake. malfeasance or fabrication.

20. It is easy to bury one's head in the sand and say, "Let us not bother! What happens to others will happen to us. It will be however easier to die, but it will be difficult to lead a maimed life. Fall out may do that with a vast population even without a war simply as a result of nuclear testing. In the same way, sometime we may feel that this may be too pessimistic a view of the situation. But with the Damocles' sword overhead what greater optimism can one show than take courage to consider the pros and cons of the situation? Again there are people who believe in leaving the issue to God. But God is reputed to be helping only those who help themselves. Then we have the United Nations. We, however, see that the U.N. is also no nearer a solution. Its proceedings are also affected by the politics of the power Blocks with the result that even smaller people like Mr. Thsombe can twist the tail. Wendel Wilkie, once a Presidential candidate in the United States, offered another solution. According to him the only solution was one world. But before it comes to fruition, the Western world or the Communist world

will have to decide to bury either one or the other system - capitalism or communism. Till then, they would never agree to a world government. Final answer is co-existence or Panch Sheel. It is near enough the solution. But we have ourselves the experience of China. Thus the difficulty is not the non-availability of a solution, The real difficulty is that violence can circumvent the desire for co-existence. Violence is the single thing that upsets all reasonable arrangements.

Proper Line of Approach:

21. So then the problem that confronts us is, 'how to circumvent this problem of violence?' No bomb, however, bursts of its own accord, much less gets manufactured on its own. Behind the manufacture and use of the bomb lies the tradition and an outlook which vest the bomb with justification, dignity and prestige; and violence has become additionally to be injected with a notion that it is the thing that can serve our supposed interests. Of all the traditions and outlooks two are the most important. One is the question of the 'social system' or the 'way of life' and the other is 'nationalism'. Wars are now fought on the one or the other of these. The first is responsible for the East-West tensions and the second is at the back of the minds of all the people in the world. Both together have encouraged sentiments in people's mind in the name of security, justice, honour, dignity and so on.

22. The genesis of the bomb thus finally reduces itself to this: how can we tackle or assist in tackling these two problems *viz.* way of life and nationalism.

We take up first the issue of East-West relationship. In a postscript to the book 'History and Hope' which is a record of discussions of a conference held in Berlin on "Progress in Freedom" in 1960, Prof. Micheal Polanyi gives a passage from the biography of Karl Marx by Isiaiah Berlin:

> "The manuscripts of the numerous manifestos, professions of faith and programmes of action to which he (Marx) appended his name, still bear the strokes of the pen and the fierce marginal comments with which he sought to obliterate all references to eternal justice, the equality of men, the rights of individuals or nations, or liberty of concience, the fights for civilisation which were the stock in trade of the democratic movements of his time; he looked upon these as much worthless cant indicating confusion of thought and ineffectiveness.

23. It cannot be said that the diatribe against 'the stock in trade of the democratic movements' is without any substance. There has been more talk than action and the many platitudinous claims that have been made continue to remain unfulfilled. This furnished an opportunity to the opponents to invert the truth and tell the world of have-nots, in the words of Michael Polanyi:

> "It is not the consciousness of human beings that determines their existence but conversely it is their social existence that determines their consciousness".

> "Such an ideology simultaneously satisfied both the demands for scientific objectivity and the

ideals of social justice by interpreting man and history in terms of power and profit while injecting into this materialistic righteous society. The potency of this combination has its counterpart in the weakness of the position confronting it – the position that we ourselves are upholding. Our scientific outlook conflicts with our moral convictions, as it denies their objective justification. Our most fervent beliefs falter on our lips as their authenticity is questioned by our critical powers. Our intellectual conscience has driven our moral conviction underground."

So much in relation to East - West relationship and the way of life. If the issues stated by Polanyi are solved then naturally we shall have a different world.

24. Next we come to the issue of nationalism. Erich Fromm poses the problem of nationalism thus :

"Nationalism is our form of incest, is our idolatry, is our insanity. "Patriotism" is its cult. It should hardly be necessary to say, that by "patriotism" I mean that attitude which puts one's own nation above humanity, above the principles of truth and justice; not the loving interest in one's own nation, which is the concern with the nation's spiritual as much as with its material welfare – never with its power over other nations. Just as love for one individual which excludes the love for others is not love, love for one's country which is not part of one's love for humanity is not love, but idolatrous worship."

25. These two studies bring us nearer to the line of approach we can follow in relation to the East-West tangle.

Role of Non-Violence:

26. I do not want to claim for non-violence that it can directly solve the issues or that it will answer all the requirements of the approach we have narrated above. But Gandhiji's approach can help us to find out ways and means (i) to circumvent violence which upsets all reasonable solutions; (ii) to reconcile our scientific outlook and our normal convictions and (iii) to reconcile our duty to the nation with our duty to humanity.

27. Search for the eternal truth was Gandhiji's aim of life. What is after all the aim of science if it is not search for truth? Man's achievements so far in the external fields of science should convince us that there lies an immense latent potential in him. Without this potential, such achivements would have been impossible. But the difficulty is that this potential genius of man is exploited for researches in the field, external only. Science has been neglecting research in the field of the source or sources of this latent potential research into this field of spirit about which we talked yesterday on 'Atma Tatva'. Supposing we had remained content with the researches on our nervous system, but had not bothered about the brain which controls and provides energy to the nervous system would it not have appeared unscientific! Science has encouraged a split personality. Modern man has two selves now: a highly developed self projecting outside dealing with nuclear and thermo-nuclear science and a backward self within dealing

with such delicate problems as relation with things of spirit and human beings.

28. Socially and spiritually a primitive man is thus equipped with advanced scientific and technological knowledge of such things as nuclear fission and fusion. It is but to be expected that he will behave as he is doing. One can as well hand over a lighted torch to an untrained chimpanzee. If this analysis of mine is correct, scientific research into the realms of spirit is as necessary as search without. Man will only then be free from the handicaps of lopsided development. India can be useful to a degree in this direction. It possesses, of course, in a loose form, the record of researches made on an individual and on an ad hoc basis. Along with that the whole experiment of non-violence and all the results of the quest carried out by Gandhiji and many of his followers like Vinobaji and others can be of reasonable value.

29. But this process is sure to take time – time even after the need for such research is universally recognised. In the meantime clashes will go on occurring. Violence sets in a chain reaction. Measures will have to be taken to see, therefore, that the people of the world realise the grave moment in their history. The first thing that is necessary is to educate the people about the implication of the violent warfare and the grave consequences that may follow such a course. It may be that they may not be able to avoid such warfare directly. But even when they fight with weapons of war, they will have to take into account their responsibility to keep the conflict within limited bounds. This means that a machinery has to be developed to inform the people about the consequences

of war in the nuclear age. A machiney has been organised for this purpose in the United States and U. K. We were ourselves trying to do it in India. But the crisis intervened and we had to stop it. Nevertheless it continues to be an urgent obligation awaiting fulfilment on the part of men of peace in India, that they organise such a machinery and educate public opninion on the question of futility of war as well as its dangerous implications.

30. The third thing necessary is to provide peaceful alternatives to the settlement of international disputes. It will not be possible for the national states to liquidate their armies or give up the business of violent warfare unilaterally, till the people forming the nation realised the necessity for it – in other words, till the people are educated as mentioned above. But even in the meantime the vicious circle has to be broken. The chain of violence can safely be broken at the point where the individual comes into the picture – individual who has faith in the medium of non-violence. He will place no responsibility for his views or actions upon anyone else. He will not involve his government or his nation. He will neverthless function on his own, to carry conviction to the people about the consequences of war on the human race and the need for peaceful approaches by their own governments. People of the eminence of Sir Bertrand Russell and Cannon Collin in U. K., Dr. Martin Luther King, A. J. Muste, Horace Alexander in the United States and others are raising their voice to prevail upon their own governments to give up manufacture of nuclear weapons and are even resisting the authority of their governments. Gandhian experiment has leaped to the very places which tried their best to crush it. This

circle of friends though small is the hope of the human race. It is this small circle that will also be able to fulfil the hopes expressed in UNESCO charter to see that 'the frontiers of peace are built in the minds of men'. As this circle widens and the masses come into the picture, the hands of the peace-loving governments in the world will be strengthened and their voice will be heard in the United Nations as the voice of humanity, thirsting for survival and peace.

31. Among the rank of the peace-loving countries of the world, stands India with the Prime Minister Nehru as her symbol despite the fact that India is engaged in fighting militarily against Chinese aggression. India has declared through its Parliament that it will under no circumstances use nuclear energy for preparing nuclear weapons. Moreover, India has repeatedly declared its faith in the policy of non-alignment to which she still adheres. The policy of non-alignment is the right policy to adopt for a nation which is working for the avoidance of a world conflagration. India cannot take the onus of accentuating polarisation, which may be the inevitable consequence, should she foresake the policy of non-alignment. Indla is not a small country and its weight one way or the other would upset the precarious balance.

Last but not the least, India is working for cessation of nuclear tests and for general and complete disarmament.

India needs from her people active support in this noble task. All thinking people should try to strengthen the hands of the Prime Minister and the Government of India and other Governments working for similar ends.

32. Finally, what is needed is the undying faith on the part of the people in the ultimate success of all righteous causes. "SATYAMEVA JAYATE" (It is only truth that wins) is our nation's motto and not 'Satyameva Jayate' backed up by guns and mortars or bombs. Then the gun wins and not the truth. Realization of truth is the aim for which generations of men and women of India have worked for ages past. It is a basic reality. No man who has reposed his faith in truth has been let down by nature so far. We should be more concerned with righteousness of our cause and the correctness of our means and should go forward with faith in fulfilling our duty. Nuclear age will demand a faith in us of a comparable character. We cannot face the problems of the nuclear age with the degree of faith that was adequate for the stone age. Faith in the weapons of violence has placed us in a dilemma and brought us close to suicide. The only solution is co-existence; but co-existence that will not permit itself to be circumvented by violence. What is left therefore for us is to develop our faith in non-violence.

LECTURE - III

SOCIO - ECONOMIC IMPLICATIONS OF NON-VIOLENCE

To-day we take up another controversial subject. Lives of great men have always something in their approach which is of a permanent value. It is for the individual studying their lives to sort out that permanent part. He should be rational enough to understand that many things that they said or did had only temporary relevance. The programmes for instance that they formulated as well as the policies they enunciated could be effective only at the time because they fulfilled the needs of the particular occasions. It would be wrong to consider all of them to be applicable at all times. If an attempt were made to apply them when they neither fitted the needs of the situation nor of the demands of time, that would result in a total fiasco. Woollens, lovingly knitted by a mother for a child of one, are good for it when it is a year old. It would be ridiculous to expect the child to put them on when it grows into a teen-ager All that Gandhiji did during the days of struggle was so very important at the time. But what will continue to be of permanent importance to an Indian and to India is the dynamic medium of non-violence for building up or developing human relations on the essential spiritual basis of truth and justice. Similarly, we may defend ourselves militarily as we are doing today. But what is of permanent importance is to realise that wars and violence have extremely

dangerous implications. They have produced contradictions which only a non-violent approach can resolve. This is being realised by great men all over the world. It is so very necessary that we realise this also and not rely on the capacity of wars and violence to solve our disputes.

2. In the same way the third important aspect which is of permanent value is the socio-economic pattern Gandhiji was working out, which we are going to discuss today. Here again, we shall have to be careful not to emphasize those features of it which were of a temporary nature or which were the outcome of his subjective reactions. That would be mis-reading him in the existing context. At the same time there are good many aspects of his socio-economic approach which have an enduring value for us. Our own interests require that we do not by - pass them.

Gandhiji's Picture of Future Economy of India:

3. In an interesting exchange of letters in 1945 the two master minds of India discussed this subject. Gandhiji wrote to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru:

> "I want our position vis-a-vis each other to be clearly understood by us.....The bond that unites us is not political. It is immeasureably deeper and......unbreakable. Therefore .....I earnestly desire that in the political field also we should understand each other clearly. ......We both live for the cause of India's freedom and we would both gladly die for it. .. ...Whether we get praise or blame is immaterial to us. ......I am now an old

man. ......I have, therefore, named you as my heir. I must, however, understand my heir and my heir should understand me. Then alone I shall be content."

4. Gandhiji then related his picture. 1 crave your indulgence to quote it at length since it is the basis of today's subject :

"I am convinced that if India is to attain true freedom and through India the world also, then sooner or later the fact must be recognised that people will have to live in villages, not in towns, in huts, not in palaces. Crores of people will never be able to live at peace with each other in towns and palaces. They will then have no recourse but to resort to both violence and untruth."

"I hold that without truth and non-violence there can be nothing but destruction for humanity. We can realise truth and non-violence only in the simplicity of village life and this simplicity can best be found in the Charkha and all that the Charkha connotes. I must not fear if the world today is going the wrong way. It may be that India too will go that way and like the proverbial moth burn itself eventually in the flame round which it dances more and more fiercely. But it is my bounden duty up to my last breath to try to protect India and through India the entire world from such a doom."

"The essence of what I have said is that man should rest content with what are his real needs

and become self-sufficient. If he does not have this control, he cannot save himself. After all, the world is made up of individuals just as it is the drops that constitute the ocean. This is a well known truth. "

"While I admire modern science, I find that it is the old looked at in the true light of modern science which should be reclothed and refashioned aright. You must not imagine that I am envisaging our village life as it is today. The village of my dreams is still in my mind. After all, every man lives in the world of his dreams. My ideal village will contain intelligent human beings. They will not live in dirt and darkness as animals. Men and women will be free and able to hold their own against anyone in the world. There will be neither plague, nor cholera, nor small-pox; no one will be idle, no one will wallow in luxury. Everyone will have to contribute his quota of manual labour. ...It is possible to envisage railways, post and telegraph ... and the like ... "

5. We shall, if we were to carefully study the above picture, find that Gandhiji was working for an agro-industrial set-up. Such a set-up would not begin with heavy industries; it would not aim at a very high standard of living; it would not be competitive; nevertheless it would ensure a stable and contented society functioning on the basis of truth and non-violence or the principle of Sarvodaya. This is the broad approach that one can gather from this correspondence.

6. It is unnecessary for me to repeat the warning given above. From its very nature this picture contains a few things which were of temporary application and others which are of fundamental importance and great significance. In the latter category fall three things which we can locate with ease, as we read Gandhiji's thoughts - (i) his emphasis on a village oriented economy; (ii) his emphasis on a simple way of life; and (iii) his emphasis on a cooperative socio-economic texture. His aim and purpose in emphasizing this obviously was to make it possible and easy for his countrymen to lead a life dedicated to the cause of truth and non-violence. This was the central theme of his life and the letter only emphasized it over and over again.

7. To the student of modern economics the whole approach would seem to be a challenge to all that he has learnt. Modern economics teaches us that rapid industrialisation is the key to economic progress; Gandhiji seemed to contest this proposition. Modern economics suggests that the high standards of living denote a happy society; he seemed to differ here also. Modern economics believes in competition and material incentives as an essential condition, the base of economic progress; he contested that too. But Gandhiji, however, never approached a problem from a negative angle. Although he sometimes did refer to the shortcomings of the modern approaches, basically his approach was conditioned by the stark realities of the Indian situation.

Village Oriented Set-up:

8. Gandhiji, it should be remembered, was not a stay-at-home. He had seen the wide world. He had

heard enough about the immense progress made in the economic field by the Western nations, about its speed and about the contribution made by it in the field of full employment, mass literacy and sanitary and health services. He was a sensitive person - sensitive to human misery - whether it originated in indigence or ill-health or ignorance. He did not want his countrymen to suffer for a day longer. What then was the reason for his insistence on a village oriented set-up - or in the language of the economists, on an agro-industrial set-up? What was the reason for his opposition to the industrial pattern of the west? His reasons were both fundamental and based upon the exigencies of Indian conditions.

It would be harsh on him to say that he was a revivalist or that he wanted India to remain aloof from the world. As if answering that charge, he had once explained :

> "I do not want my house to be walled in on all sides and my windows to be stuffed. I want the cultures of all lands to be blown about my house as freely as possible. But I refuse to be blown off my feet by any."

He was anxious that in the process of development we do not destroy the moorings of the Indian society.

9. It would be similarly uncharitable to say that he was opposed to science and technology. Here again let us see his statement :

> "Provided the character of the village industry is maintained, there would be no objection to

villagers using even the modern machines and tools that they can afford to use. Only they should not be used as a means of exploitation of others."

10. He believed that the village of his conception would furnish a strong and durable foundation on which the great edifice of India could stand. He was not interested in needlessly shaking the existing foundation of the country's economy because he was hopeful that with the assistance of modern science and technology it would be possible to 'refashion and re-clothe' the village and secondly because the urban economy had a particular orientation about which he had doubts. Big finance and big commerce would be its fly-wheel. Rural economy would be no match for the urban economy either in production or competition, nor would the rural economy be able to withstand the pulls that the urban economy would exercise over the Government through press, propaganda and politicians.

11. Gandhiji also felt that Indian villages in the past had provided a field for developing initiative and creativeness for all who were prepared to work. Foreign imperialism had stolen those avenues from the people for its own aggrandizement. With Independence, an opportunity had come to the rural people to revive that vast field of initiative and creativeness. It would not be right or just to deprive them of this opportunity; more so as it would be impossible to provide them a similar field on a similar scale in the time to come. A village-oriented set-up could be 'refashioned and re-clothed' as he said with the assistance of science and technology

and could prove the least burdensome on the scarce resources of the nation. It would cut down the over-head costs of management, transport and supervision.

12. He was also convinced that it would be easy to integrate and harmonise the social groupings in the country's life at their source in a cooperative effort with agriculture, animal husbandry and processing industries forming the economic base; and the programme of basic education, with its emphasis on worth and dignity of all those engaged in the task of building a great country, forming the emotional and cultural base. He wanted to harness the power of the State and the power of big finance and commerce to cater to the human aspect of man. The men of India's destiny according to him were the farmers, the cattle breeders, the artisans and they should be strengthened first. It was an all-inclusive approach. Panchayats, cooperative societies and basic education were to be the three basic mediums for bringing about these socio-economic changes.

13. As against this, the urban economy according to him symbolised an economy with mass production as its objective. This would ruin the surviving industries in the rural sector and augment the plight of the unemployed and under-employed rural labour. That economy would encourage a culture which would be career and comfort oriented. Rural culture was labour oriented. The former would encourage dissipation of the basic human urges. It would set an example in idleness and lethargy before the rural people. That would neither be in the interest of the people nor that of the country. Urban standards were

also directed to higher and higher consumption. There would be a growing disparity between the standards of the rural and the urban people. It would be difficult to bridge the gap. It would create schisms in the rank of the people.

Gandhiji's Opposition to the Western Modes of Production and the Western View :

14. It would be desirable in the first instance to enquire into the reasons for his insistent opposition to the modern Western economic set up before considering the question of special circumstances of India which obliged him to the conclusion he arrived at. His objection to the modern economic approach could be divided broadly into two parts. According to him man differed from an animal in that he was a tool-making creature. Man's progress as a human being wholly depended upon the scope he gets for initiative and creativeness. The Western modes of production deprived man of both these and made an automaton of him. Secondly he felt that the whole concept of the industrial civilisation was based upon an unnatural view of man's purpose of his existence on Earth. This view pushed man away from the main and principal aim of his existence. Man has certain urges common with animals. But they were not the end of his vision of life. Man was designed by mother nature for realising her dreams of a higher and spirtual existence for him. If he was given awareness or consciousness, it was not to function as a fondled puppy or a fondled kitten. He was designed by Nature to be free – to undertake responsibilities, attain knowledge, earn respect and care for his fellow-men, all with a view to realize oneself. The

Western attitude not only led him on to a wrong path but distorted the aim of his existence and perverted the meaning of freedom, respect and knowledge. Gandhiji's main theme was to settle the direction of our journey no matter when we reached there; only we should not deviate from that direction.

15. Literature is growing in the West also depicting the state of the modern society and the direction in which it is moving. Erich Fromm questions the sanity of the Western approach to production. George Orwell draws a picture of a soulless automaton of a society, driven by an authoritarian regime, deprived of most of its human qualities. Aldous Huxley draws a picture of a democratic society slowly losing its awareness of those qualities through over-organisation and under the soporific effects of propaganda, of the art of selling, of chemical persuasion and hypnopaedia.

16. The great author of 'Sane Society', Mr. Erich Fromm, analysing the effect of the Western modes of production and social organisation says :

> " Orwell, as well as the other two authors (Huxley and Zamyatin) are only implying that the new form of managerial industrialisation, in which man builds machines which act like men and develops men who act like machines, is conducive to an era of dehumanisation and complete alienation in which men are transformed into things and become appendices to the process of production and consumption. All the three authors imply that this danger exists not only in Communism of the Russian or the Chinese versions but that it is a danger inherent

in the modern mode of production and organisation and relatively independent of the various ideologies."

17. Huxley endorses this thesis of Fromm and narrates the possible consequences of the Western modes of production and organisation on the individual as well as society :

"During the past century the successive advances in technology have been accompanied by corresponding advances in organisation; complicated machinery has had to be matched by complicated social arrangements, designed to work as smoothly as a new instrument of production. In order to fit into these organisations, individuals have had to de-individualise themselves; have had to deny their native diversity and conform to standard pattern; have had to do their best to become automatons."

"An organisation is neither conscious nor alive. Its value is derivative and instrumental. It is not good in itself. It is good to the extent that it promotes the good of the individuals who are parts of the collective whole. To give organisation precedence over persons is to subordinate means to ends. What happens when ends are subordinated to means was clearly demonstrated by Hitler and Stalin. Under their hideous rule personal ends were subordinated to organisational means by a mixture of violence and propaganda, systematic terror and systematic manipulation of minds."

18. It will take pages to explain the interconnection between the modes of production as well as the social organisation and the qualitative growth of man. Stage by stage as science and technology develop we find a few things happening in the affluent societies. Appetites grow increasingly; human relationships become more and more commercialised; priorities in the matter of attention and supplies shift from human beings to goods; social ills such as child delinquency, alcoholism, insanity, suicides, homicidal tendencies multiply and the most terrific of all the consequences is that man loses his moorings

19. India, it is true, is far away from the press-button age. It should, however, be recognised that the educated India has set its heart upon the Western Social system as also the Western mode of production. Some of us do sometimes talk against gigantism, against centralisation and in favour of decentralisation. But it is not what the individuals say that counts; it is what the Economic Organisations aim at that counts and these bodies are not necessarily managed by philosophers or educationists. The present day societies are propelled by the organisations engaged in the field of industry and commerce, banking and insurance, stock and bullion exchanges and have a great pull with the country's press and its political organisations It is what these mediums do that counts. It should be clear to anyone that they have in view an industrial society or a "technological society". This is their decided objective. This objective, with its roots in rapid industrialisation, both for civil and military purposes, can only take the Indian society also to the same destination about which the thinkers of the West are so worried today.

20. There may be people who believe that it would be possibe to temper the character of this technological society to Indian needs. The question is: Who will temper it and how? Individuals, however powerful and dynamic, can only play a marginal role in the framework that obtains today. The most influential 'Bapu' could not stand between Partition and United India and against so many other things that happened in the post-freedom era. Even the indomitable Sardar, opposed as he initially was to the demand for the division of the country. was in the end obliged to yield. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, allergic to communalism as rarely anyone else in India has been, had also to yield. A human being, however mighty he may be, has the freedom to make a choice for himself; occasionally he can make a choice for a small or big group; once, however, it comes to a system entrenched in human weaknesses and buttressed by governmental authority, power of the purse and intelligence the human being has to accept the inevitable.

21. I realise that we cannot reject, out of fear of apprehended consequences, the advantages of science and technology, especially when we know that they would be useful in liquidating the phenomenal poverty, disease and ignorance that exist in our land. All I want to say is that there must be some fundamental thing in our approach which can safeguard our unsuspecting simple people from falling from frying pan into fire.

22. Aldous Huxley raised this fundamental question pertaining to the aims of Western social set up and brought out what Gandhiji was aiming at. He observed "We have always chosen to adapt our

economy and technology to human beings, not our human beings to somebody else's economy and technology."

23. This is how Erich Fromm sums up the situation:

> "What, however, Proudhon, Tolstoy and Bakunin, Durkhein and Marx, Einstein and Schiewtzer talk about is man and what happens to him in our industrial system, Although they express it in different concepts, they all find that man has lost his central place, that he has been made an instrument for the purpose of economic aims, that he has been estranged from and has lost the concrete relatedness to his fellow men and nature, that he has ceased to have a meaningful life."

> "His intelligence is excellent, his reason deteriorating and in view of his technical powers he is seriously endangering the existence of civilisation and even of the human race."

24. Gandhiji might not have read all that the West has written. But his intuition spotted out that the Western approach was inadequate, erroneous at the source and in any case inapplicable to the genius of the Indian people and the conditions in India. While his approach was expressed in the language of religion, it did not lack a practical appeal. Let us just glance over the practical aspects of the problem which induced him to lay so much emphasis day in and day out on the village-oriented set up.

Practical consideration :

25. According to Gandhiji's opinion the fate of India was going to be decided by three basic facets of India's life :

(a) the social approach of the people ;

(b) pattern of national living or standard of living having regard to the means and resources of the country ; and

(c) pattern of the industrial set-up having regard to the size of India's population.

26. We have dealt with the positive aspect of his social objectives. He believed that the essential purpose of human life was not material acquisition but search for God which he described as search for truth through self-purification. He was insistent that it is this concept of life for which India has lived and for which India is working.

27. Coming to the pattern of national living, Gandhiji emphasized :

> "Civilisation, in the real sense of the term, consists not in the multiplication but in the deliberate and voluntary restriction of wants. This alone promotes real happiness and contentment and increases the capacity for service".

Apart from this aspect of individual happiness, on which people may hold different views, Gandhiji was intensely conscious of the realities of Indian situation. The question that he put to his people was whether the nation could afford living standards

beyond their real needs, as he puts it in his letter having regard to the pecuniary resources available? That question is still before us. Detailed calculation of the statistical data shows that in 1961-62 the per capita income of the lowest ten per cent of our country's population was Rs. 6-60 per month; and of the five layers above it was Rs. 9-60, Rs. 11-70, Rs. 13-25, Rs. 17-35 and Rs. 21-50 per capita per month respectively. Sixty per cent of our population is covered by this number.

28. As against this fact, it is estimated by the Nutrition Advisory Committee that a person would need Rs. 35 per month for food alone to sustain himself in comparative health. It is not the fault of the Government or anyone that this is not available. But I am taking the situation as it exists. India, if she wants to avoid an internal conflict should bear in mind the fundamental consideration that the standards of living for a large mass of the people till the end of the century will hardly be above bare sustenance level. Gandhiji was of the view that in this state of circumstances the difference between the minimum and the maximum in the matter of consumption standards should not be high. Practical and moral aspects suggested a national pattern of living which should not be beyond India's capacity. The possible income at the end of the century in the lowest twenty per cent is likely to go up to Rs. 20 per capita per month. It will be hazardous to promote classes with desperate high standards of living and more especially to indulge in vulgar ostentation when the large masses of people are living on the verge of sustenance.

29. But to him even more important than the question of pattern of living was the question of the industrial pattern. He was moved by the spectacle of mass unemployment and under employment in the country. Even now India has a crore on hand fully unemployed and double that number partially unemployed. Every year there is an accretion to the labour force by 25 to 30 lakhs of people. Fifteen per cent of the rural people belong to the category of landless labourers. Fifteen per cent of the land holders own less than an acre of land. Gandhiji felt that apart from their inherent weaknesses, the Western methods of production were absolutely inapplicable to Indian conditions. The problem of industrialisation in India ought to be considered on its own merits, taking into account the immensity of the problem, and the scarce resources India possesses. These masses of unemployed and under-employed people were at the moment out of the orbit of rural economy even though they were a part and parcel of the rural population. They have no place in the urban set up also. He was of the view that they should be so absorbed that they become an integral part of the national economy. He sensed danger in leaving such a large and growing mass at a loose end. He felt that India could not be stable till comparative stability was assured to this formidable section of the people. It was this that led him to suggest an agro-industrial set up and oppose centralisation in industry. It is getting clear to the economists who have studied the problem of employment that he was not at all wrong in insisting upon concentrating on rural industries. Today the current is swinging in the direction he had pointed out. It is being seriously considered that the processing

industries should, as far as possible, be located in the decentralised rural sector. But that also is not going to offer a complete solution of the problem. If we want this section of our society to feel stable in the national economic set up, we shall have to go much further still and see what can be done to fix them up as an integrated part of the rural economy.

30. It will be wrong to consider this as a retrograde step or as working for a primitive economy. Just as our love for the old economy should not make us blind towards the 'wind of change' from outside, our fascination for the 'wind of change' should not make us blind towards the realities of our country's situation. Moreover, to consider that centralisation in industries is the only way in which modern science and technology can be employed for the betterment of the people is to argue that, whatever the realities, the needs of science and technology must prevail. Science and technology after all are intended for the people and not the people for them. Centralisation is creating problems of unemployment even in thinly populated countries. India with its dense population must then be written off for full employment. Secondly, decentralisation does not mean absence of heavy and capital goods industry. Any one who has that fear should study the Karachi Resolution of the Congress in 1931. The idea never was to prevent anything. The idea was to consolidate the foundations of the country's economy. Nothing that stood in the way of doing this was acceptable to Gandhiji. Nothing that helped the process was taboo for him.

31. On the basis of this test, India would in any case need heavy industries to strengthen the

base of the decentralised structure of economy. India would also need heavy industries to provide the economic over-heads to the rural economy. It would need them for expansion of her rural economy. It would need banking, insurance and other commercial and trade institutions too. They would, however, be motivated by the single consideration of strengthening the rural base.

32. It is possible to ask me if Indian planning is proceeding on these lines now. The answer is not easy to give. There are two currents of thought and as I have said already it is not what a few people say that counts. There is no question that the greater pull is against this approach; India, in the last few weeks, has become conscious of her new obligation. To save India from Chinese aggression is a great and noble undertaking. The same can also be said of helping India to develop India's manpower and natural resources in a manner that India could develop her essential personality. None can desire India to be a third rate copy of any foreign economy, I have no doubt that our planners are studying this questions in that light even in the midst of the emergency. India can draw upon what is in her interest from outside, but in the final analysis it is she who has to solve her problems. None can solve them for her. I have full faith that this will happen.

33. Thus we end our round of talks on Gandhiji. We discussed some basic and fundamental truths emanating from his teachings which are of permanent interest to our country. He gave us a new medium thahts ould govern the relationship between man and man, without distinction of caste or creed,

nationality or rank and without distinction whether the other person is a friend or an adversary. He provided us with a dynamic technique by which we can fight untruth and injustice proceeding from any source whatsoever. He also gave humanity a hope in dealing with the greatest of human problems - the problem of human survival. He gave an instrument by which even if we cannot resolve that problem, we can temper its course till wisdom prevailed and the global disarmament was achieved. Finally, he gave us a foot-rule to measure our growth on the socio-economic plan. The test of our growth and of the socio-economic development, according to him-lay in an integrated approach to the problem of man as man. Man should have a proper direction. He should have the wherewithal to develop his initiative and creativeness. He should have employment and finally he should have concern for the people round about. The social system can be judged only on the basis as to how its members treat the weakest and the under, developed. According to him the safest course for India was to begin with the village and go upwards and always bear in mind that our moorings are safe and secure.

It is true that we cannot go at one step as far as he wanted. Nevertheless, it will be profitable for us to hold this mirror before us so that we know what we possess, but more than that, we know what we lack.

May I again thank you, Mr. Vice-Chancellor and friends, for the great opportunity that you have given me to speak on this subject. I do not know if these talks will be useful to the student world. But

I must own that they have given me an opportunity to refresh my mind in the midst of the changes that have taken place and are continuously taking place in the society and the world. Let us hope that with Gandhiji's blessings we may be able to build up an India of his dreams at least to a moderate extent.